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# Pasture and Hayland Management

## Minnesota Job Sheet



USDA Soil Conservation Service  
St. Paul, Minnesota

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### What is pasture and hayland management?

This practice is the proper treatment and use of established stands of perennial forage crops being harvested as pasture or hay. This includes timing mechanical harvest or grazing for the best stage of plant growth, maintaining adequate stubble heights after cutting or grazing, supplying nutrients to maintain healthy productive stands and controlling the invasion of undesirable weeds and brush.

### How it helps the land

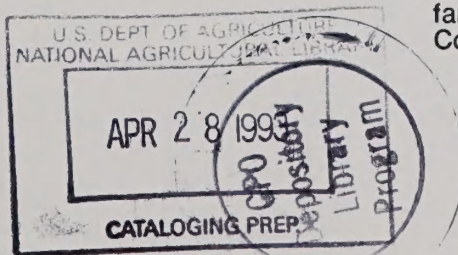
Pasture and hayland management will extend the life of the desired forage species, maintain higher quality and quantity of forage supplies, protect the land from soil erosion and reduce water loss.

### Where the practice applies

Pasture and hayland management can be used on all fields established in desirable perennial plants that are being utilized for pasture and hay.

### Where to get help

For assistance in planning pasture and hayland management on your farm contact your Soil Conservation Service office.



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## Requirements of this practice

Pasture and hayland management will provide adequate vegetative growth to protect the land from soil erosion by wind or water. In addition it should meet the forage quantity and quality needs of the livestock producer.

## Applying this practice

This practice is considered applied when the vegetative cover is being maintained throughout the year to prevent soil erosion and forage production equals or exceeds the objectives of the land user.

Planning a pasture and hayland management program involves balancing forage needs by evaluating forage production capabilities. Forage production is than compared with livestock needs. The producers goal should be to provide a year-long supply of forage. Specific details for planning a year-long forage program can be obtained by completing a livestock grazing and forage balance sheet.

## Other Considerations

Pasture and hayland management may require one or more of these items to meet the requirements for soil erosion control and forage production:

- Identify the species of plants in the pasture or hayland.
- Apply lime and fertilizer based on soil test results and University of Minnesota recommendations.

## Considerations...

- Implement a planned grazing system to improve forage utilization and maintain plant stands. Do not overgraze. Maintain the minimum stubble height for the plants being managed.
- Cross-fence large pastures to help in applying a planned grazing system.
- Provide adequate water supplies for each pasture.
- Control weeds and brush with mowing, labeled herbicides and/or prescribed burning.  
  
Mow accessible areas in a pasture following grazing to manage plant growth not grazed by the livestock.
- Harvest hay at the desired growth stage for the plant species. Make additional cuttings at the recommended interval.
- Leave adequate stubble height when mowing for harvest, weed control or cutting ungrazed growth.
- Harrow areas of livestock concentration to recycle nutrients from manure accumulation.

## Maintaining the practice

Pasture and hayland management inputs need to be applied each growing season to maintain an adequate stand of vegetation.

As pasture and hayland becomes unproductive, renovation or reestablishment is needed. **Prior to tillage or removing woody vegetation from a pasture or hayland to prepare the land for reseeding, contact SCS for a highly erodible land and wetland determination.**

If the land is highly erodible you will need a conservation compliance plan. See the Job Sheet on *Pasture and Hayland Planting* for guidelines on planting.

### Harvest guidelines - Hay

<u>Species</u>	<u>Cut Height</u>
All grasses	3 inches
Alfalfa	2 inches
Trefoil	3-4 inches
Red Clover	3 inches

### Harvest guidelines - Pasture Grazing

<u>Species</u>	<u>Begin Height</u>	<u>Min. Stubble Height</u>
(Inches)		
Smooth Brome	10	4
Timothy	8	3
Orchardgrass	8	4
Canarygrass	8	4
Bluegrass	5	2
Big Bluestem	12	6
Switchgrass	16	8

## Fertilizer Recommendation

<u>Field #</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>Lime</u>	<u>Month to Apply</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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